

PRESS RELEASE

Kentucky Division of Emergency Management

For Immediate Release

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KENTUCKY OFFICIALS PREPARE FOR POTENTIAL FLOODING

FRANKFORT, KY: August 04, 2009 - Kentucky Division of Emergency Management director, Brig. Gen. John W. Heltzel, has activated the Commonwealth Emergency Operations Center (CEOC), which is located in Frankfort, to Level IV. Officials from the Kentucky Division of Emergency Management (KYEM), Kentucky Army National Guard (KyARNG), along with other state officials continue to watch an approaching storm capable of producing heavy rain and severe thunderstorms this afternoon and evening across portions of the commonwealth.

KYEM officials have been in contact with the National Weather Service (NWS) offices of Louisville, Paducah and Jackson earlier today. Discussion and preparation for the likelihood of potential flooding throughout much of the state as a weather system capable of producing very heavy rain is expected to move into the Commonwealth.

This weather system is capable of producing additional rainfall amounts of historical amounts. With the ground already saturated, this rain is capable of producing additional flooding and possible mudslides in some areas. The National Weather Service anticipates issuing several flash flood watches in advance of this system. There also exists the possibility of severe weather accompanying this weather system.

This is a separate weather cell that hit parts of Kentucky earlier today. Jefferson County experienced heavy rainfall amounts of six inches that fell in about an hour, causing localized urban flooding.

Additional reports of stream flooding were reported in Montgomery and Powell Counties.

The Kentucky National Guard's 123rd Special Tactics Squadron is supporting Jefferson County Emergency Management for potential flooding missions. Two swift water rescue teams consisting of a total of four personnel with trucks and rescue boats are ready to respond as necessary.

KYEM continues to monitor conditions throughout the state from the Commonwealth Emergency Operations Center (CEOC) and is ready to coordinate any assistance if requests are made from local officials.

KyARNG is prepared throughout the state, as well, with personnel and equipment and are ready to deploy and provide help if needed.

In the event of flooding, it is advised to limit travel unless absolutely necessary. But, if you must travel and do encounter water over a roadway; **"STOP! TURN AROUND, DON'T DROWN!"** KYEM Assistant Director of Operations, Charlie O'Neal, advises, "Do not attempt to drive or walk through any high water, please seek an alternate route" He added, "it is better to arrive a little late by detouring to your destination than becoming involved in a tragic accident."

You can find current river conditions and links to additional weather information at www.erh.noaa.gov/er/ohrfc.

For statewide driving conditions, visit: <http://511.ky.gov/>.

Flash Flooding Safety Rules

According to statistics from the National Weather Service, flash floods and floods are the most recent year's #1 storm related killer in Kentucky and across the United States.

- o If driving, DO NOT DRIVE THROUGH FLOODED AREAS! Even if it looks shallow enough to cross. The majority of deaths due to flooding are caused by people driving through flooded areas. Water only one foot deep can displace 1500 pounds! Two feet of water can easily carry most vehicles. Roadways concealed by floodwaters may not be intact.

- o If caught outside, go to higher ground immediately! Avoid small rivers or streams, low spots, culverts, or ravines. Do not try to walk through flowing water more than ankle deep, as it only takes six inches of water to knock you off your feet. Do not allow children to play around streams, drainage ditches, or viaducts, storm drains, or other flooded areas.

- o If ordered to evacuate or if rising water is threatening, leave immediately and get to higher ground.

For additional information and storm tips, go to www.kyem.ky.gov. There you will find valuable links to other agencies, weather and storm safety information.

KYEM director, Brig. Gen. John W. Heltzel, reminds everyone to stay informed of local and state weather conditions and forecasts. Should severe weather occur, take shelter immediately and stay tuned to your local broadcast media and weather alert radios.

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